
People of one of the Channel Islands, Sark, are voting today for their first ever democratic government. The election ends nearly 450 years of feudal rule. The island's constitution was changed to comply with European human rights legislation. Jon Kay reports:

At precisely ten o'clock the doors to Sark's **village hall** opened. Waiting **in line**, a **handful** of islanders keen **to cast their votes** before the morning ferry departed.

The hall snooker room has been converted into the only **polling station** with specially constructed **plywood booths** where voters can fill in the lengthy **ballot paper** in secret.

There are fifty-six candidates **seeking office** in all - that's one in eight of the islands adult population. There'll be twenty-eight **seats** in the new parliament and the result should be **declared** here just after ten o'clock tonight.

Jon Kay, BBC News, Sark

Vocabulary and definitions

village hall	the venue in a village which is a centre for official and social events
in line	queuing one after another
a handful	here, a small group
to cast their votes	to take part in the election, to vote for their chosen candidates
polling station	a place where people go to vote in an election
plywood booths	small enclosed areas in a polling station where you can vote in private; in this case they were made of several thin layers of wood stuck together
ballot paper	a piece of paper on which you write or mark your vote
seeking office	here, competing to become members of parliament
seats	here, members
declared	announced, made public

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Read and listen to the story and the vocabulary online:

http://www.bbc.co.uk/worldservice/learningenglish/newsenglish/witn/2008/12/081210_sark.shtml